



## Bringing Advanced Telecommunications to Native American Communities

Given the isolation and low population density of many tribal lands, the benefits of telecommunication and information technologies are very important to Native American communities. Advanced technologies offer a way to increase Internet access, improve access to emergency and long-distance medical services, and enhance education and employment opportunities in Indian Country. To date, approximately 10 percent of TOP grants have been awarded to Native American tribes or organizations which serve tribes.

The **Wireless Web Access Links for Remote User Services (WALRUS) Project**, an initiative of **Kawerak, Inc.** (Nome, Alaska), provides wireless Internet access for 16 remote tribes in isolated areas of Alaska to improve information about tribal services and cultural history.



**Navajo Technology Empowerment Centers (NAVTEC)** (Window Rock, Arizona) establishes a digital network for e-commerce development, e-training, and an electronic election system for all Navajo Nation general elections in the Western Navajo Agency.

**Montana Indian Technology and Cultural Heritage (TeCH) Learning Centers**, a project of the **Montana State University** (Bozeman, Montana), establishes reservation-based technology training centers at which tribal elders and leaders work with local youth, tribal college educators, and others on the digital preservation of historical, cultural, and language resources.

**Cherokee Nation** (Tahlequah, Oklahoma) are creating **Cherokee FIRST (Friendly Information Referral Service Team)** to electronically link seven Cherokee community centers in rural and remote areas of Northeast Oklahoma. Users will participate in a wide variety of services (some in the Cherokee language), including health, human services, housing, education, and public safety.

The **Kalispel Tribe** of Indians (Usk, Washington) are developing a broadband digital network to assist Indian tribes in eastern Washington preserve and sustain their shared tribal culture, history, and language.

The **Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium** (Anchorage, Alaska) are developing **RAVEN - the Rural Alaska Video E-Health Network** - using broadband to connect 204 tribally-managed hospitals and clinics to improve critical clinical services to remote locations. RAVEN will use technology to provide emergency medical care and continuing education and allow multiple organizations to schedule conferences online through an automated scheduling system.